



# FIRST BATTALION FOURTH MARINES



February #, 2003

Newsletter

1<sup>st</sup> Edition

**CO**  
LtCol Mayer

**XO**  
Maj Holahan

**Sgt Maj**  
Sgt Maj Hamby

**A Co CO**  
Capt Griffin  
1stSgt Lopez

**B Co CO**  
Capt Gomez  
1stSgt Archambault

**C Co CO**  
Capt Collins  
1stSgt Zhorne

**W Co CO**  
Capt Moran  
1stSgt Hoskins

**H/S Co CO**  
Capt Citrano  
1stSgt Richardson

## Commanding Officer's Comments



Dear wives, families, and friends of the Marines and Sailors of 1st Battalion, 4th Marines:

Greetings from the high seas somewhere near the Mariana Islands in the Western Pacific Ocean. It's hard to believe we are already into the third week of our voyage and will soon arrive at our destination and rejoin the rest of the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division. Your husbands and sons continue to work incredibly hard preparing themselves for the rigors of possible combat action and you should be immensely proud of each and every one of them.

First, let me thank all of you for making our departure so memorable. Your cheers, prayers, tears, and hope all help strengthen our resolve to complete this mission quickly and return home as fast as possible. I encourage each of you to continue the strong support you provided your husband during the weeks by continuing to overwhelm him with letters, prayer, and thoughts.

I would especially like to thank all of the Battalion's Key Volunteers (KV's), who unselfishly devote precious free time each day ensuring the Marines' and Sailors' wives receive accurate news of their husbands deeds and have someone to call when they need advice regarding military support agencies. In addition to their primary duties, our KV's do so many wonderful things behind the scenes that they are absolutely critical to this Battalion's success on the battlefield by helping to ensure all is well on the home front. Next time you receive a phone call from a KV who is passing news of your husband, I encourage you to give her a hearty "thank you" as she is doing this service entirely on her own free will and because she has a heart of gold!

For those of you who have relied on email to remain in contact with your loved one, I want to remind you that our email service will stop when we go ashore, and all of us will have to rely on "snail mail" to stay in touch. I encourage you to continue to send email until our service stops, but also start mailing traditional letters now so your Marine or Sailor continues to get uninterrupted news from home. Your support will keep him mentally and emotionally strong while deployed, and it does more than anything else to ensure he makes it back to your side.

As you follow the news in the future, look for your Marine or Sailor to appear on national television and in articles. Once we go ashore, our Battalion should be assigned three to six media personnel who will stay with us and report on our actions and deeds. Since your husband or son is part of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Marines, 1st Marine Regiment (or Task Force One or Regimental Combat Team One), 1st Marine Division, those are the names to listen or look for. Once we are assigned our media personnel, I will try to get word back through the key volunteer network on which news agencies are reporting on us.

Your husbands and sons spend long hours each day honing the skills of their profession. We began training almost immediately once we sailed, and quickly learned that everyone must pull together to make the best use of the available space. There is a great sense of "Blue-Green Team" across all the ships as everyone understands the gravity of the situation and that we are all in this together. To counter the cramped conditions, several of the rifle companies have gone to reverse cycle training, which means they sleep during the day and train at night when most everyone else is sleeping.

While many of you are weathering the coldest part of the year, we are sailing towards the equator and feel every bit of the tropical humidity. Most of our time outside is spent shooting our weapons; moving with our night vision equipment; or conducting nuclear, biological, chemical (NBC) defense training.

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all of which involves wearing full combat equipment and our very hot NBC suits. The humidity is brutal while wearing gas masks, flack jackets, and NBC suits, but it's important training and the Marines and Sailors all understand the need for first-rate training. The protective equipment makes us all feel better, but one has to get used to the weight as the average Marine carries approx 150 lbs of equipment and supplies!

As many of you know, our Battalion's motto is "Whatever it takes" and I can assure you that your Marines and Sailors have lived up to our motto 100 times over these past few months preparing for combat operations in support of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM. Although we are deeply saddened to leave our families, and uncertain what the future may hold, most everyone seems "gung-ho" to be part of this monumental and historic event. Perhaps our President's words, spoken just days after the tragic terror attack on the World Trade Center, best tells the responsibility your Marines and Sailors feel:

*"We have found our mission and our moment... The advance of human freedom, the great achievement of our time and the great hope of every time, now depends on us... Our nation, this generation, will lift the dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter and we will not fail."*

Your husbands and sons are truly remarkable professionals and you should be very proud of them as they are the best America has to offer.

Semper Fidelis  
LtCol John Mayer



## WEAPONS COMPANY

During these past weeks, Weapons Company continued to improve their skills. The platoons conducted live fire exercises aboard the USS Boxer, Dubuque, and Comstock. Everyone has been getting adjusted to life on ship, finding time to train in limited spaces and at odd hours. The Marines of Weapons Company continue to condition their bodies physically, and keep a rigorous training schedule during the day and night. However, on Super Bowl Sunday, the Company had a brief respite from their hectic training schedule and watched the game together.



## "C" COMPANY

Throughout the 227-year history of the United States Marine Corps, Marines have left home on short notice to answer our nation's call. On January 17, 2003 the men of Company C took their place in this tradition as we departed southern California in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. For some, this is our second time out in less than a year. For others, this is their first operational deployment. For all, this is the adventure of a lifetime. Our honor and privilege is to serve the United States of America, and we are proud to do so in this fashion today.

Times such as these are characterized by great sacrifices. You, our family members, are owed a deep debt of

gratitude for your support and understanding during these difficult times. I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to personally thank YOU. The physical and spiritual well being of this company is of utmost importance to me, and your affection only serves to strengthen our resolve. I encourage you to send letters, cards, packages, and whatever else you deem appropriate. There are few better sounds than to hear one's name announced at mail call. I know your Marine would appreciate your efforts in this regard.

The company is focused on preparing ourselves for whatever situation may arise, but we have celebrated a number of events over the course of January. We welcomed **Christine Metz** to the family as she married Lance Corporal Metz. Also, a number of our Marines enjoyed birthdays to include Corporals **Vettel** and **Valles**; PFCs **Gawel**, **Stauffer**, **Bryant**, and **Young**; and Privates **Jones** and **Montes**. As well we promoted some of our very deserving Marines on the first of February. Sergeant **Infante**, Corporals **Espinoza**, **Scott**, **Chavezmartinez**, **Franklin**, and **Pegram**; and PFC **Washburn** all were rewarded for their hard efforts.

As the new month dawns our spirit and confidence are high. Take comfort in the fact that your Marines are ready!  
-Capt Collins



## "B" Company

Hello to the families and friends of the Bravo Company team. As you all know we embarked aboard the USS Dubuque on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January.



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and set sail the following morning for the Central Command area of operations. We spent a couple of days adjusting to shipboard life, but quickly began training on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January.



Your Marines and Sailors have been doing a fantastic job! They are getting plenty of exercise and we have already conducted two live fire shoots. It is truly a pleasure to watch these men in action. All of our new joins are being integrated into their teams and squads and are working hard to refine the solid skills they learned at the Schools of Infantry. Please keep the support coming! I've included a photo of your boys in action.

-Capt Gomez



## "A" COMPANY

Another deployment finds the Marines and Sailors of Alpha Company aboard the USS Dubuque.

We spent some long, hard hours getting everyone ready and

embarked aboard ship. Throughout our first weeks on ship the company dedicated most of its time to training and shipboard orientation. The typical day begins at 0600 and lasts until around 1700. Throughout the last two weeks they have been instructed on a myriad of classes.

Gy Hurst has led the Marines and Sailors in both day and night live fire exercises, which take place on the flight deck. The daytime shoots were emplaced to instill trust and confidence in the Marines weapons. The nighttime shoots were emplaced to instill trust and confidence in the night vision equipment. Overall the month of January has gone by rapidly for all of us, with all the changes we have gone through.

We would like to congratulate a few Marines. First to Corporal Fleming, who won the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Regiment and 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division NCO of the Year Board. Second to PFC Higinbotham and his wife, who on January 30<sup>th</sup>, gave birth to their second child. Little Natalie, was born a healthy 6lbs 7 oz and 18 1/2in.

Oh, can't forget. GySgt Samuels wishes his wife a happy birthday.

All of us from Alpha Company want to wish all of our loved ones the best and thank you for your love and support during this deployment!

-Capt Griffin



## Cannon Cockers Augment "Horse Marines"

Marine Artillerymen from Battery B, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines have joined the great "Horse Marines" in their adventure abroad. The detachment's role is to support the infantry with 155mm Cannon Artillery, which can fire 96 pound projectiles in excess of 20 miles. The Marines of Bravo Battery are proud to be given the opportunity serve with such an outstanding Infantry Battalion.



## HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

### Battalion Aid Station

Hello to all our families back in sunny southern California. The Corpsmen of 1st Battalion, 4th Marines are continuing to train in order to be ready for any mission. The time we have on ship has given us a chance to offer several medical classes designed to teach Marines to help each other in the event of injury.

**GOOD INFO : MCCS ONE SOURCE:** Provides assistance and information 24 hrs a day; 7 days a week; 365 days a year by calling the following numbers or accessing the website listed. Degreed, credentialed consultants and specialized research teams are available to answer questions pertaining to everyday issues, financial matters, education and schooling, health and wellness, parenting and child care, relationships, midlife and retirement, and legal issues. Confidentiality is assured. This service has personnel available who can translate over 140 languages; is TTY/TTD accessible; and is on-line accessible for low vision users needing assistive technologies. It is available for Marine active duty service members, Marine reserve service members, family members, and Navy personnel attached to Marine units.

Toll-free CONUS: 1-800-433-8868 Toll-free OCONUS: 96-001-800-237-42374 En español: 1-888-346-9188

Collect Call OCONUS: 484-530-5908; TTY/TDD: 1-800-346-9188 ;

Online at [www.mccsonesource.com](http://www.mccsonesource.com) (User ID: Marines; Password: Semperfi

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I am especially proud of the Esprit de Corps shown by every Corpsmen in the battalion who worked long hours prior to the deployment. Their work helped to ensure that we now have all the tools necessary to get our Marines home safely. More importantly, I would like to thank all of the families who have been so supportive in this difficult time. Your emails have been so important to maintain the high morale on all three ships and we look forward to getting mail from you in Kuwait.

I wish I could put a personalized message from each of my Corpsmen in this short letter but I do not have the space. Instead I will summarize what we all want to say to each of you. To our wives and girlfriends "Honey, I love and miss you and will be home as soon as I can" To our kids "Do your homework. Eat your vegetables, and help Mommy with the chores" To our parents "Mom and Dad, Thanks for teaching me to be the man I have become." And to everyone else, thank you for your support and friendship.

-HMC(FMF) Matthew Lubold  
Battalion Medical Chief. 1/4

## Scout Sniper Platoon

To all of the family members of the Scout Sniper Platoon, your loved ones are hard at work fine-tuning the training they accomplished before our deployment. We have been training on such topics as patrolling, radio work, using air assets and artillery, and of course shooting. I am constantly impressed by their hard work and devotion to their craft. I am sure you are as proud as I am of your young men. Everyday they prepare for the conflict to come, everyday they push themselves harder, and everyday the Marines of the Scout Sniper Platoon surpass my expectations. Please continue to keep us in your hearts and prayers and we will see you soon.

-1st Lt Paul Stieglitz

## Communications Platoon -

After departing San Diego on 17th January, the communications platoon began a different life aboard the ships. During first several days, a rigorous training schedule was set and the platoon began their training in various subjects designed to sharpen their skills in all military subjects. On an average day, communications platoon training include topics in Nuclear Biological Chemical (NBC), weapons handling or live fire shooting, radio equipment/procedure class, and night vision equipment. One of the highlights of the voyage happened on when two communications platoon Marines were promoted on February 1st. Congratulations to Sgt Sanders and LCpl Diaz.

-Lt Paul S. Hahn



## S-1

On January 17, the 1/4 S-1 transformed itself into the Combat S-1. Ink pens in one hand and machine guns in the other, are split among two ships providing the battalion with both administrative support and the knowledge that it can sleep soundly with us "on the wall."

We are training to get ready, right alongside the other Marines.

To all the families of LCpl Zimmerman, LCpl Valiente, LCpl Bernardphillips, Cpl Lopez, GySgt Vanderlipe, and LCpl Wilson (who is working hard for Combat Cargo), you should be incredibly proud of the job your Marines are doing and the professionalism with which they are doing it. We miss you and keep the letters and e-mail coming!

-2ndLt Ethan Astor

## S-2

With two new Marines on the team, LCpl Wiegand and LCpl Rice, the S-2 shop began conducted by Sgt Dunavan, to brush up on our skills. Sgt Dunavan also assisted them in getting them used to the normal 1stBn 4<sup>th</sup> Marines S-2 daily operations life. Classes were conducted on Command and Control Personal Computer program (C2PC) and the newly acquired MDACT computers. Daily updates to intelligence information was researched and then briefed each night at the staff meeting in order to improve the overall awareness of the Battalion Staff

Weekends were spent catching up on sleep, improving personal administration issues (laundry, gear cleaning, haircuts, etc), watching movies and contacting friends and family back home. This last Sunday, Captain Wilbur had brunch with the S-2 shop discussing everything from spies and bad guys to the space shuttle tragedy.

## S-3

**OPERATIONS NOTES.** The Operations Section embarked aboard ship safely. Cpl Finley did a superb job ensuring our vehicle and equipment were embarked appropriately. Congratulations are in order for Sgt Barber who was promoted to his current rank on 1 Feb. CWO Gere, Cpl Lind, and LCpl Telles embarked all our NBC equipment and are busy ensuring the readiness of the battalion. Our peerless air section made up of Capt Wahl, Capt Parkinson, and Capt Marvel are spreading the word about air support and Capt Wahl is working hard to keep track of all the people we fly from ship to ship. Gunner Parks, Lt Martin, Capt Gibbs, MGySgt Johnson, and GySgt Askew are shaping the battalion's training focus to ensure our readiness to offload and commence operations at our destination. Your Marines are doing tremendous things - I know you are as proud of them as I am. Keep the faith.

-Maj Casado sends.

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## S-4

The S-4 and supply sections were the driving forces behind the battalion's successful embarkation, and just recently these motivated Marines enjoyed a sunny Saturday afternoon formation on the flight deck of the USS Boxer during which a number of them were promoted and given well deserved awards.

SSgt Tunnel, embarkation and logistics chief, was awarded his third Navy Achievement Medal for outstanding work deploying the entire battalion. Cpl Petrino was promoted from lance corporal and awarded a Certificate of Commendation for his contributions as maintenance management chief and forklift operator prior to deployment.

Supply Marines Cpl Arroyo and Cpl Chichil were promoted from lance corporals. Cpl. Arroyo was awarded a Certificate of Commendation for his excellent job managing the battalion's property during embarkation. LCpl Trevino received a Certificate of Commendation for his outstanding work ordering and tracking numerous supply items ordered over the past three months.

Motor transport Marines celebrated a promotion and an award. LCpl Willis was promoted from PFC. On January 19 LCpl Martinez was awarded a Certificate of Commendation during a similar formation aboard the USS Dubuque. He was recognized for his role in preparing the motor transport section for embarkation and the tactical marking of the battalion's vehicles.

Two Marines are awaiting good news from home. 2ndLt Bednar and Cpl Arroyo are both expecting babies in February.

## Other Information

The Marines of ATF-West are authorized to make deposits into an account called the Savings Deposit Program (SDP). This program allows members to earn 10% interest per year, compounded quarterly (2.5% per quarter). Marines can make the deposit once they enter a designated combat tax exclusion zone (where we are going). You can deposit all of your pay that isn't used for other allotments. (After all deductions and allotments, the cash you actually receive on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of the month). Advance pay and travel advances may not be deposited. The maximum amount that will earn the high interest rate is \$10,000. Allotments have to stop when you leave the combat tax exclusion zone. Interest will stop accruing 90 days later. To withdrawal money you must make arrangements with the designated representatives from the SDP office. Marines or someone with a special power of attorney can open the account through the unit administrative office (RPAC). Details are available from the chain of command and our Adjutant's office. This is not a checking account and is meant more for money that you don't need for day to day expenses.

Did you know that spouses can request to leave base housing for a period in excess of 90 days through the housing office?

If you do, you must:

- A. Provide to base housing a bonafide POC for yard upkeep.
- B. Provide to base housing a bonafide POC for emergencies.
- C. Take all pets with them.
- D. Ensure that all doors and windows are locked.
- E. Ensure that all appliances, except freezer and refrigerator are turned off and that thermostat is set to an appropriate level to save energy.
- F. Make arrangements with the post office to forward mail.

The government will not pay to store your furniture. If you choose to vacate housing permanently, you may do so and receive Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), but in order to return to housing you will have to put yourself on the waiting list again.

-XO sends.